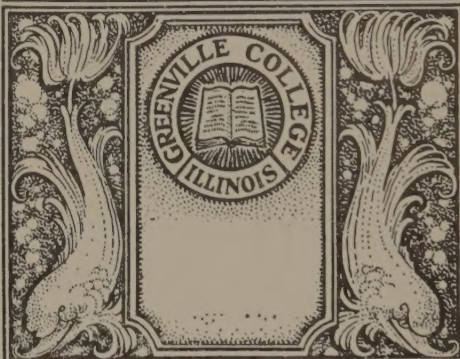


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IMAGES IN JADE

TRANSLATIONS
FROM
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Y

Images in Jade

TRANSLATIONS
FROM
CLASSICAL
AND
MODERN
CHINESE
POETRY
BY
ARTHUR
CHRISTY
Y

NEW YORK
E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.
1929

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FIRST EDITION

TYPOGRAPHY BY S. A. JACOBS
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TO
GERTRUDE
WHO SHARES WITH ME A LOVE
OF
THESE IMAGES AS
SYMBOLS
OF
THE WORLD OF BEAUTY
Y

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of these poems appeared originally in *The Open Court*, *The Harp*, *The Lyric West* and *Voices*. I also would acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Herbert Giles' *Chinese Biographical Dictionary* and *History of Chinese Literature* for supplementary details used in the biographical sketches of this book.

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HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE

THE presentation of another volume of translations from Chinese poetry at a time when the Oriental is distinctly in vogue, when poems after the Chinese manner, when affectations and spurious translations appear constantly in all sorts of journals, needs some justification. An explanation of the circumstances and methods by which this volume was composed is a duty and not an apology.

I was born in China of missionary parentage, in an interior town where our small household for many years comprised the only white men within a radius of one hundred and fifty miles. I grew up, as most youngsters in these circumstances grow up, learning the Chinese from my amah long before I learned the English from my mother, repeating Chinese nursery rhymes instead of Mother Goose, and as I grew older, playing foot shuttle-cock and the other traditional games of Chinese boyhood instead of the American. My first initiation into school was not that of the average Western kindergartener who passes through the vicissitudes of the grammar and high school years. Instead, I sat on the board benches of Chinese class rooms with the sons of the preachers, the colporteurs and the cook, not at all confused by the din of every boy in that room chorusing at the top of his voice the early lessons. Then followed more school years in Shanghai, with other American children, more extensive

travel and a broadening of my Chinese horizon. Finally, in the due course of time, the necessary transition from the world in which I had been born and spent sixteen of my growing years, to America and college.

But China-borns rarely lose their first love of the East. I am no exception. Wherever there has been opportunity I have kept in touch with my boyhood world. And so, when in my teaching of classes in English literature at the University of Minnesota, and later in my contacts with Chinese students of Columbia and New York Universities, they have come to me with the perplexities that arose in their study of a foreign literature, because I could explain matters to them in their own tongue, mine was an opportunity to keep in friendly touch with the youth of China. From these contacts have come these poems. In my attempts to explain the fundamentals and methods of English prosody, I determined to go back with them to the basic principles of all poetry—the image, sound, rhyme, meter, rhythm. Together we made translations from the Chinese as a basis of comparison. I had no thought at the time of publishing these translations, but as they grew in number and those to whom I showed them became interested and urged their publication, I asked my friends Messrs. Li Cheuk Po and Kiang Ying-tze to help me enlarge my selection. Without their co-operation this book would truly have not been possible.

As to form and method—every translator must determine his own. One extreme is that of Miss Hammond who has attempted to render into monosyllabic English lines the monosyllabic root-ideas of the classical Chinese. This method is the most advantageous in giving the impression of the original, particularly the conciseness and compression

of the thought. But a great difficulty rises because of the diversity between the English and the Chinese languages. Monosyllabic English words of the same number as in the Chinese line cannot give the complete thought of the Chinese. Modifying elements are of necessity omitted. Miss Lowell's method is the other extreme. A single Chinese word, even the connotation of the word, is expanded into as much as a complete clause. Of necessity, this method because of its profuseness gives no impression of the concise original.

The method I have employed might be termed a compromise between these two. With the good fortune of being able to speak in Chinese with my collaborators, I have tried to render into English the very impression that one Chinese would give to another in reading the poem aloud. I have not attempted to either compress or expand the thought. Furthermore, I have considered it a greater duty to keep the authenticity of the original than to cast the mood or content into the mold of an English verse pattern. Since Chinese rhyme and rhythm are practically impossible in English, what remains of most importance, in my mind, is the image. In this book, then, I have primarily attempted to present the images of the original and the subsequent moods they suggest. The reader will find here no poetry that is conventionally English in form or flavor. My most serious concern has been to give the sense of the original as I understood it while working with my Chinese friends. If the result is not good English poetry in every instance, it has, at least, the advantage of being Chinese poetry that has not been distorted by compulsion into a foreign pattern.

Finally, I have attempted to keep a consistent Mandarin romanization of all Chinese names and words, for the rea-

son that it is the most common and universal. But I myself, and my assistants, use the Cantonese. This fact has made the rendering of Chinese words into a consistent English form and pronunciation more difficult, and will, I hope, explain any inconsistencies I have not been able to correct.

March 8, 1929

ARTHUR CHRISTY

THE METHODS OF THE CHINESE POET

Y

THE METHODS OF THE CHINESE POET

TO DEAL at any length with the metrics of Chinese poetry would be merely to repeat much of what has already been written. The subject is of such complexity that to do it justice would be as impossible as to treat fully, in a few pages, the entire field of English prosody, with its various stanza forms such as the Spenserian, or the differences between the Petrarchian and the Elizabethan sonnets, or again the dactylic or anapaestic or trochaic lines and their uses. Furthermore, many solid volumes have been written in elaboration of the poetic principles of the "new" poetry of the Occident and its difference from the traditional, only adding to the many other solid volumes which have been written in the history of English literature on the art of poetry. Likewise in Chinese literary history there have risen innovators and critics who have rebelled against the traditional and written in defence of their reforms, while the conservatives have in their turn defended the traditional staunchly in a battle in which the stylus has covered paper with as much ink as the quill of the West. From this mass of opinion and fluctuating form it is only possible to give the most general, constant, and permanent elements of Chinese poetry.

The Chinese poet strove for a sound effect based on the "tones" of his language. He did not strive, as many an Occidental poet has striven, to make of his poem "an orches-

tra of words". There is nothing in Chinese poetry that can be compared to Tennyson's *Lotus Eaters* or Poe's *Bells*. A strict adherence to the rules of stressed and unstressed syllables was observed. These syllables were either flat, that is, pronounced with a level or even utterance, or deflected upwards or downwards or cut short. The latter correspond crudely to our accented syllables in Greek or Latin. The most ordinary stanza was constructed with an ear for the utmost symmetry, as, for instance, if A stands for stressed and B for unstressed syllables, it ran as follows in a five-word line:

A A B B A
 B B A A B
 B B B A A
 A A A B B .

In the long evolution of Chinese poetry exceedingly rigid patterns and verse forms have been developed. In every instance the character has determined the structural peculiarities. In the earliest times four words to a line was the rule, but any number up to eight was allowable. Even one word lines were found. The stanza was usually in the form of a quatrain, although it could consist of any number of lines up to sixteen or seventeen. Every line did not rhyme, but rhythm was considered a constant essential. Blank verse in the Miltonic sense was unknown. It may be moreover noticed that, in connection with the structure of Chinese poems, the sense generally ran in couplets, with the moral or finale of the thought given in the last two lines, much in the same way as in Shakespeare's sonnets the concluding lines sum up the sense of the whole.

But the most impressive peculiarity of Chinese classical

poetry was its diction. Until the modern literary renaissance there had risen no effective or successful attempts to use the language of common speech as the vehicle of the poet's thought. The concentrated root-idea of the scholar's ideograph had been used through all centuries down to the twentieth. To illustrate this, and to show the difficulties of translation a poem by Meng Hao-jan will be given.

CH'UN HSIAO

SPRING DAWN

Ch'un mien pu chueh hsiao
Spring sleep not sense dawn

Ch'u ch'u wen ti niao
Place place hear twitter bird

Yeh lai feng yu sheng
Night come wind rain voice (sound)

Hua lo cheh to shao
Flower fall know much few

This poem, written by Meng Hao-jan who lived during the years 689-740 A. D., has come down through the centuries, accumulating as it came, a mass of commentary and notes which attempt to explain the meaning. I quote from a Chinese anthology the following notes upon each of the four lines:

Line 1. In this poem every word stresses the word "dawn".

It is spring weather and without knowing it, dawn has come.

- Line 2. The poet hears from his bed the sound of birds everywhere. Because it is dawn the sun rises and the birds greet the sun. Or, it is a sunny atmosphere so everything twitters together.
- Line 3. Because he (the poet) hears the birds chirp his whole heart is concerned with the flowers. Because day has dawned he particularly thinks of the past night. During the night, before the day dawned, were wind and rain, the things the flowers dread. The sound of wind and rain spring from the character "hear".
- Line 4. On account of the wind and rain the flowers must fall. So on hearing the sound he knew the flowers must have fallen. But, lying in bed he hears, yet does not know how much (the destruction). This is exactly where the "dawn" character comes in. He has found out how much, for day has dawned.

This is the prose commentary necessary for even a Chinese scholar's understanding of the original meaning. With its help the ambiguity of the original uninflected root-ideas may be rendered into an intelligible form, but there still remains every possibility of misunderstanding. In fact Chinese scholars themselves often will differ as to the exact interpretation of a character. In the light of the commentator's notes and the context, the exquisite poetic sentiment of the original may be rendered into English as follows:

Spring sleep—before I know it, dawn!
Everywhere the singing of birds is heard.
During the night came sounds of wind and rain;
Who knows how many flowers have fallen.

I have come to the conclusion in the preparation of this volume of translations that the best way to help Occiden-

tals understand Chinese poetry is not to emphasize the mechanical aspects of their methods of composition. What seems to me of infinitely more importance in an attempt to understand the mind and work of the Chinese poet is a knowledge of his philosophy of life and the universe, and his manner of looking at the phenomenal world from which is drawn the sensuous imagery which so clearly marks his poetry.

Chinese poetry has its limitations. One need not read widely to be aware of the ever-present farewell poem written when leaving for a foreign province upon some mission of state, or the ubiquitous drinking song, or the absence of the love theme which is so common in Western poetry. These are common traits, and conventional. It is almost impossible to escape them. Western critics have also complained of a lack of variety. For the most part, all true. But there are other impressive aspects. A love of birds, of flowers and clouds, of mists and waters, of hills and the moon are ever present characteristics of Chinese poetry and art in every age. Nature, the universe, is the Chinese poet's field. Here he exercises the widest liberty in indulging his passion for the things which please his fancy. And what he produces is not primitive or elemental in feeling, nor is it a mere enjoyment of the sensuous. If a comparison may be permitted, he is more Wordsworthian than Keatsian. His poetry is a chastened and subdued product of reflection, for he regards Nature not merely as a physical phenomenon with sensuously enjoyable qualities, but as an animating soul which is in intimate relation with life itself. For him spirit interpenetrates matter. He is a thorough-going mystic. He is not satisfied merely with a faithful reproduction or presentation in his art of what he sees and feels, although he

does this supremely well. His desire is to render Nature's more subtle and essential aspects, for in them he believes he finds the way towards an appreciation of the law of our being and the universe as a whole.

The Chinese artist, painter or poet, derived his view of the cosmos from Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism. With this view is possibly an infiltration of the monism which came from India through Buddhism. Confucius also had a hand in molding the artist. Confucius' insistence on this world and the benefits of practical propriety exerted a tremendous influence on the common people. And the poet did not escape it. In him is traceable the influences of these three religions. He devoted himself to this world, its sensuous beauties as well as its serious problems of state-craft and the social proprieties enjoined by Confucius. He often reflected the Buddhist's view of the futility of finding peace in the gratification of human desire. But he also constantly, in a Taoist's manner, aspired to a larger vision of things. He felt the limitations of a regulated life; he strove to relate his own existence to a more comprehensive whole. Here he resorted to the philosophy of Lao Tzu which conceived of Nature as an infinite process of self-creation, one stage of development succeeding another more perfect in its greater proximity to the ultimate reality. To Lao Tzu the problem of solving the ills of human life was to do nothing, to be carried along by the mighty current of the cosmos. The way, he said, to clear the world of its dirt and muddy aspect was identically the way one cleared a bucket of muddy water. Agitation, an attempt to be rid of the impurities merely prolonged their evil influence and presence. The thing to do was to do nothing. The sediment would settle to the bottom, the water would clear itself. So

with man and his world. With a wise passivity the eternal Way would exert itself.

But the humanizing influence of Confucius, who was pre-occupied with man himself and declared that man began where Nature left off, was accepted by many of the poets. This acceptance saved them from the inevitable passivity of a consistent following of Lao Tzu. The merging of these two views of life sometimes produced a poetry of great profundity. The poets synthesized in their imaginations the idyllic view which Taoism tended to exalt with a human element and an interest in a phenomenal world. They varied in the degree and the intensity with which these views predominated, but the result in many instances was a great and deep poetry. In constant touch with the Over-Soul, and with their feet planted firmly on the ground, the Chinese poets possessed a universe in which to breathe and write. Many were fettered by traditions, by the limitations of the conventional subjects permitted, by circumstance and by rigid poetic forms, but throughout the best of Chinese verse one may sense a consciousness of and relation to the cosmic Way.

So much for the Chinese poet's philosophical heritage. How, then, did he approach his world? How and what did he sing?

In general, Chinese poetry at its best is in the lyric form. Unanimously, it seems, its makers anticipated Edgar Allan Poe in the thought that in reality there could be no such thing as a *long* poem. When the Chinese lyric at its best is examined, what is most impressive is the unusual economy of words with which the most subtle thought is expressed. This has already been illustrated in the quotation from Meng Hao-jan. The number of words to the average

lyric line varies from three to nine, the most common being five and seven. Four such verses often go to make up a complete poem. The form is far more restricted than the sonnet. But within the limit of these verses a skilful poet was able to reveal his whole personality and the intensity and magnitude of the mood which possessed him when he wrote. Every poem he composed was the expression of a whole range of feelings which he had pondered over and recollected in tranquillity. What he aimed at was not the pure expression of his feelings. He knew that too much spontaneity in such expressions without a regard to their careful adjustment and synthesis was apt to be crude, to defeat its own end. He realized that an excessive, uncontrolled outpouring of a natural temperament would soon exhaust itself. The Chinese critics had laid down the universal truth, since time immemorial, that the primary interest in poetry was to be found in the feelings and passions, but these were to be subjected to the imaginative reason. If thus subjected they would not emerge in their original state of crudity, but suffused, transmuted, refined. The product would be something new, something rich in content. The feelings and passions would be delicately fused together and unified. In expressing them, the poet would not give a complete account of that with which he dealt. He left it to the reader to create in his own mind that impression of totality and completeness which was intended. The reader was to be no passive recipient; he was expected to be a creative artist himself, willing to be as personally attached to the poem as the poet.

The poem, the link between the poet and his reader, was thought of as something supple and flexible, consisting of only a few flashes of insight or intuition into the mys-

teries of life and nature. It was a comprehension of the underlying forces of human nature and the cosmos which the poet wished to attain. All he tried to do in the poem was to express a few of the significant phases of the understanding he had obtained. From these the reader was to reconstruct for himself the complete experience which was represented by the phases. This method was best illustrated in the form most commonly known as the "stop-short", a four line poem. In it the poet led his reader up to the gates of infinity; it was for the reader himself to pass through those gates.

A great deal of poetic appreciation thus depended upon the reader. It was for him to be sensitive to all fine touches. He was to be susceptible to the delicate impressions furnished to him. Above all, the reader was expected to be a poet himself, to build for himself from the casual notes presented to him, the beauty and real meaning of the original experience. The Chinese did not consider it the poet's function to give a careful account of his experiences. In order to feel the real intensity and power of that experience, it was for the reader himself to be in direct contact with it, to be, as it were, a human Aeolian harp delicately catching the notes which the poet released, and in turn rendering them again into the music and harmony of a mellow experience.

Obviously enough, this is the method which produces the variety, power and inexhaustible charm which is so elusive in Chinese poetry. A poetic gem of this sort, dealing with the essence of life, may be interpreted both by the poet and the reader to embody so much truth and beauty that the more they ponder over it, the more they find it limitless and unfathomable. The poem is all the while simple.

Its substance is apparently sensuous, and yet there is a profundity and an intimate contact with cosmic, ultimate reality which is revealed only in part, allowing the reader himself to comprehend the whole. It is this method which gives directness of vision and simplicity of diction. It is also the source of an unobtrusive perfection of form and delicacy of feeling. These are the phases of Chinese poetry I have tried to render in these translations. The sound and literal idiom of the original cannot be reproduced in English. But the image can.

From the imagery of these poems, from the few significant phases of the experience presented, the reader must do what the Chinese poet expected of his own countrymen. A willingness to enter into the spirit of the original experience is essential to an appreciation of Chinese poetry. Without this mutual understanding, a good deal of Chinese verse will seem a very prosy art indeed.

王維

WANG WEI

Y

WANG WEI

WANG WEI, one of the great poets of the T'ang Dynasty, lived during the years 699-759 A. D. He was a native of T'ai-yuan in Shansi. Achieving early fame as a poet, painter and physician, he won the attention and favor of the Emperor Hsuan Tsung and rose to the position of Assistant Secretary of State. In the course of a political revolution he was carried off to Lo-yang by the rebel An Lu-shan, who declared he wished to see what sort of a man a poet was, and forced to act as censor. Upon the death of his captor he received appointment again from the Emperor. But at the age of thirty-one, when his wife died, he retired from active life and in seclusion devoted himself to poetry and religion. He never married again. Living alone the last thirty years of his life, a recluse, he found his satisfactions in the joys of the country and the quiet repose of a scholar's life. Critics differ as to whether Wang Wei was a Taoist or Buddhist. The diction and tone of his poems would indicate that he was primarily a Taoist who found consolation from the ills of life in the solace of the Way. On the other hand, upon the death of his mother, he turned his famous retreat into a Buddhist monastery, and nearby he himself lies buried. But the religions of the Chinese are generally fused into an amalgam which is essentially a part of most individuals, with little, if any, drawing of strict sectarian lines. Wang Wei is typical of this fact.

Wang Wei is distinguished by a profound and beautiful optimism. He is touched to melancholy by the transitoriness of life and reputation, but in all his work there is a dominant faith that in the retired meditative life and the Way of Nature there is peace. This mood is nowhere better shown than in the first of the following selections from his work, a poem which was written on bidding adieu to a fellow poet and friend, Meng Hao-jan.

Probably there is no better evaluation of Wang Wei than that of a friendly critic who defended him against the accusation of loose writing and incongruous pictures. Professor Giles has translated the passage as follows:

"For instance, there is Wang Wei, who introduces bananas into a snow storm. When, however, we come to examine such points by the light of scholarship, we see that his mind had merely passed into a subjective relationship with the things described. Fools say he did not know heat from cold."

ON RETIREMENT

Meeting, we dismount from our horses and drink wine.

I inquire of your destination.

You answer that you have no interest in this world

And are retreating for rest in the Southern mountains.

I would not ask you again—

For in leaving behind the troubles of riches and the
cares of state

Your joys like the white clouds will have no end.

SITTING ALONE ON AN AUTUMN NIGHT

I sit alone on an Autumn night, lamenting my whitening hair.

My heart mourns the quick passing of Time.

Fruit falls with the rain in the mountains—

Insects hum under the shade of my lamp.

Ah, white hair cannot become youthful-dark again,

Nor yellow gold be made from iron.

If you would avoid the infirmities of age

The way alone is to become immortal.

FAREWELL TO SPRING

Daily man grows old without the hope of youth's
return,

Though Springtime yearly fades to reappear again.

Therefore drink with tranquil hearts,

And grieve not for the falling petals of Spring flowers.

ON PASSING TOWARD THE MONASTERY

I had not known before the location of the monastery
of Heaped Fragrance,

But I have travelled many *li* and reached the cloud
covered mountain top.

Here are old trees no human beings have ever touched.

I wonder where the tones of that bell come from?

The roar of the waterfall calls to the dangerous stones.

Where the sun still shines the green pines appear cool;

And all seems the more holy in the approaching twilight.

I do not wonder the abbot is able to overcome poisonous dragons.

ON PASSING A FRIEND'S HOUSE

Undisturbed the Autumn grass grows by the deserted
door.

No horse-litter has passed all day,
And I am the only guest who has come on the quiet
road.

Far off a dog barks within the cold forest.

You sit here with hair unkempt,
Holding your sacred books in your hand.

You and I are of the same mind—

For I care not if I become poor—I too desire only the
Way.

After I have drunk of your wine
I shall go back to my own home.

FAREWELL TO A FRIEND RETIRING FROM
ACTIVE LIFE

Close the door and go not out again:
This is the way to retire from life.
I think that it is the best.
Go back to your old home,
Drink the farmers' wine and sing the farmers' songs.
In leisure read and laugh at the books of the Ancients.
If this is your plan of life—
I will not ask you to stay.

AT PARTING

We laughed when we met;
Now at parting, we weep.
Sorrowfully must we say farewell.
The forsaken city itself broods over your departure,
And chill turns the air in the far distant hills.
When your boat is untied the current will carry you
 swiftly
Through the long evening, far away,
While I, still standing here, will look on—

ON AN AUTUMN EVENING IN THE MOUNTAINS

How clear are the mountains after the new rain!
The dusk of the Autumn evening is pouring in,
As moonbeams filter through the pine trees.
Cool spring-water flows over white stones.
A lone washing-girl returns homeward by the bamboo
 grove.
The boatman sails his barge through the lotus patch.
Although Spring is long gone
Why cannot I linger over this pleasant view?

A BIRD SONG IN THE RAVINE

The flowers of this wide world all bloom and fade—
The Spring night is so quiet the mountain seems de-
serted.

But when the moon rose and frightened the birds,
I heard their songs in the ravine.

FAREWELL TO A FRIEND

At the little dock by the willow trees people are embarking on journeys—

I know that the boatman will bring you safe to your destination.

When the fresh colors of Spring return I will think of you,

Whether you travel South or North, my thoughts will follow you.

THE PAVILION

The tall trees of the grove double the shadows which
cover the four boundaries of the pavilion.

Thick green mosses upon the stones tell how long it is
since visitors have come.

My friend is lying in the middle of the pavilion, lost
in reverie;

I have no doubt that he is dreaming of another world.

WITHIN THE BAMBOO GROVE

Sitting within the deep-growing bamboo glade,
Long I play my lute and sing.
In this dense grove no one hears my song
And the moon comes as my only companion.

FAREWELL TO A FRIEND

Farewell, my friend, my tears fall as thin threads of
silk,

As you leave me for your eastern journey.

More sorrowful yet am I at the thought of your seeing
my other friends.

My days here at Lu-yang will never be as before.

THE JOURNEY OF YOUTH

Wine enough for ten thousand cups is there on the
table—

Ambitious, fiery youths ride into the town of Han Yu.
When they meet, wits are challenged and rivalry is
keen;

Tethering their horses to the willow trees, they enter
the inn.

A POEM FOR THE STONE

How beautiful is that large stone resting by the spring!
Nearby the tossed willows dip toward my wine cup.
My admiration for this beauty is scorned by the
 Spring-wind,
For ruthlessly it blows flower petals into the pool.

A FAREWELL SONG AT WEI-CHENG

The dust of Wei-Cheng is settled with the fresh rains,
The inn-yard is beautiful with the spring color of its
reviving willows.

Let us drain another cup again,
For when you go out of the West Gate no friend re-
mains to me.

AN ANSWER

There is a lone house in Chung-nan
At the base of a towering mountain.
Here have no visitors passed for years;
The door has been constantly closed.
I have no heart for the things of this world—
I would have leisure and time.
Come, let us drink and go fishing.

AT THE LAKE

The winds are blowing beyond the shore
As I part with you at sundown.
Returning from the lake I notice
The green mountains and white clouds have also been
separated.

THE HILL

No one can be seen on this silent hill,
But one may hear distant voices.
The rays of the sun filter through the deep foliage
And fall refreshingly on the mosses.

DRINKING WITH A FRIEND

Drinking here together, let us be happy,
Although human passions come and go as the waves.
Men may be old friends, yet will they sometimes use
the sword.

Some will reach the dignitary's state and forget the
laughter of old intimacies.

The grass is green from the fresh rain,
The tree branches are swaying in the breeze of Spring.
Things of this world are not worth the asking;
We had far better retire and drink.

THOUGHTS IN NAN-SHU

There are many new houses in Nan-shu;
Old trees are gone but the willows remain.
One does not know who of the coming generation
will visit here.
No matter—in the same way did the last generation
conjecture.

張 騫

CHANG CH'EN

Y

CHANG CH'IEN

CHANG CH'IEN, who lived during the second century before Christ, was a Minister under the Emperor Wu Ti of the Han dynasty. He is celebrated as the first Chinese who travelled to the extreme western boundaries of the empire. Through his journeys, he is said to have first introduced hemp and the walnut into China. He is also credited with having learned of the cultivated grape from the Persians and teaching his countrymen the art of making wine.

Legend has it that he was commissioned to find the source of the Yellow River, which was popularly supposed to flow from heaven and to be a continuation of the Milky Way. Chang Ch'ien sailed up the river many days, until he reached a city where he saw a girl spinning and a youth leading an ox to water. Upon inquiring where he was, the girl gave him a shuttle, telling him to show it on his return to the court astrologer, who would thus know where he had been. Chang did as he was instructed, and the astrologer immediately recognized the shuttle as that of the Spinning Damsel (Lyrae); further declaring that on the day and hour when Chang received the shuttle, he had noticed a wandering star pass between the Spinning Damsel and the Cowherd (Aquilae). In this manner, Chang was believed to have sailed upon the Milky Way. Chinese authorities differ, however, as to whether the hero of the legend was the Chang Ch'ien of history.

ON PAYING A VISIT TO THE RUINS OF CHOU YU

Dismounting from my horse I enter the ruins of the
old city.

Will any one see life here again?

An east wind is blowing the grass fire into the town;

By nightfall it will be in the ancestral halls.

Towards the North one may see the village of Lin-tai.

Endlessly the never returning waters of the Chiang
flow eastward.

The courtiers of the Emperor are all gone—

Yearly Springtime returns here but never men.

A SONG IN THE GARDEN

These present flowers resemble those of yesteryear,
Yet man returns here one year older.

Alas that man's life is not like that of flowers!

Grieved at this yearly ageing of men, I drink.

You, my brothers, cannot stay to console me,

Called as you are by official duties.

But gather as friends when the flowers bloom again,

And in their fragrance the jade cup will make us
merry.

THE VISITOR FROM CHIANG-AN

A visitor has come from Chiang-An.
Mounted on a horse, he passed by the city;
In the shade of the pagoda of Sung he sorrowed,
For it was overgrown with weeds and wild grass.
He remembers his home by the side of the Chiang
River,
Where fishing boats anchor beneath willow trees.
At night-fall children brought him wine
For which he drew money in payment.
When he awakens it is high noon;
Lustily he sings of his sleep in this city.

JOYFUL THAT THE SPRING HAS COME

In February, at Po Lin, when the Spring is come,
Friends meet together for fellowship and wine.
It is as amber as the Yellow Flower,
But the salaries of officials barely cover the cost.
Here at Po Lin we are still all youths!
My friend Han and I open our mouths in deep
 laughter,
For peach blossoms redden the ground.
Friend, I still have wine—remain with me;
Let us carouse here all day long.
Though there are the lures of riches in this world,
We know they are trivial matters.

王勃

WANG PO

Y

WANG PO (648-676 A. D.)

CHINESE literary history presents Wang Po as one of the most precocious of its poets. At the age of six he was composing verse; at nine studying the classics and pointing out their defects. He took his degree at sixteen, and was employed in the Historical Department of the government, preparing dynastic annals. Later he was dismissed for writing against the cock fighting inclinations of the imperial princes. Taking refuge in Szechwan, he devoted himself to poetry.

Wang Po's method of composition was unique. He is said never to have meditated on his work beforehand, but after preparing a large quantity of ink ready for use, he would intoxicate himself with wine and lie down with his face covered. On waking from his drunken stupor, he would dash off his verses.

A FAREWELL BY THE RIVER

I bade you farewell at the Po Nan River.
The dark north clouds were hidden by the mountain
 ranges.
By the river pagoda in the Autumn moonlight
I wept for my departed friend.

A DESCRIPTION

Listless smoke hangs over the green pagoda tiles;
The flying moon is sailing toward the South.
Quiet and silent I leave my tower.
The river, mountain and cold night I cannot stand.

孟浩然

MENG HAO-JAN

Y

MENG HAO-JAN

MENG HAO-JAN (689-740 A. D.) was a native of Hsiangyang in the province of Hupeh. Upon failing to achieve success at the public examinations, he retired to the mountains and led the life of a recluse. This temper was probably the source of the close bond of sympathy that existed between him and Wang Wei. At the age of forty he left his retreat and went to the capitol to accept a political office which Wang Wei had procured for him.

The literary commentators record several interesting facts regarding Meng Hao-jan. On one occasion he was in a room with Wang Wei when the Emperor was announced. In confusion Meng Hao-jan hid himself under a couch, but Wang Wei informed the Emperor of his presence. After friendly banter from the monarch, mixed with compliments for his poetry, Meng was permitted to return home in peace. The commentators also record that he often sought inspiration for his poetry by riding on a donkey over snow.

BY THE RIVER

At dusk I moored my boat on the banks of the river.
With the on-coming of night my friend is depressed;
Heaven itself seems to hover over the gloomy trees of
the wide fields.
Only the moon, shining on the river, is near to man.

IN A SUMMER HOUSE

(A Fragment)

The daylight fades behind the western hills;
The moon rises slowly in the east,
Faintly mirrored in the garden pools.
The time of night and dreams will soon be here.

SPRING DAWN

Spring sleep—before you know it, dawn!
Everywhere the singing of birds is heard.
During the night came sounds of wind and rain;
Who knows how many flowers have fallen?

王 建

WANG CHIEN

Y

WANG CHIEN

WANG CHIEN took the highest literary degree in 775 A. D. and rose to be the Governor of a District. His political career was abruptly cut short, however, when he offended an Imperial clansman. He was on intimate terms with most of the great contemporary poets, in particular Chang Chi and Han Yu.

Wang Chien wrote a good deal of verse, but no poem is more outstanding than *The Husband Searching Stone*. It alludes to the singular case, say the commentators, of a soldier's wife who spent all her time on the summit of a hill overlooking the Yangtze River, watching for her husband's return from the wars. She was changed into a stone figure which appeared to be asking of every passerby for news of her missing husband. This thought is woven into the last line of the poem and demonstrates the poetic skill the Chinese prize most highly.

THE HUSBAND SEARCHING STONE

In searching for her husband, she watched continuously the long stretch of the river;

Then into a stone was she turned, never to see home again.

There stands she on the mountain top midst rain and wind.

Should he ever return, a stone would speak to him.

THOUGHTS ON PASSING A WINE SHOP

The day is long and I have long to drink.
Yet 'tis not that my nature craves for wine,
But I see all have taken of the cup.
Why should I be awake by myself?

張籍

CHANG CHI

Y

CHANG CHI

CHANG CHI was a native of Kiang-nan who greatly distinguished himself as a scholar and poet. He lived during the eighth and ninth centuries A. D. In 815 he was recommended by Han Yu, a fellow poet, for governmental appointment, and rose to be a tutor in the Imperial Academy. Chang Chi's fame, however, rests primarily upon his poems. The poem *By a Virtuous Woman Upon Receiving a Proposal* is said to be his best. "Its beauty," says a commentator, "lies beyond the words."

BY A VIRTUOUS WOMAN UPON RECEIVING
A PROPOSAL

You know I have a husband,
And yet you give me these pearls?
I am flattered at your proposal;
Your pearls will I place in a pocket of my gown.
But—my house is grand and magnificent,
For my husband serves with the sword in the palace.
Although I know your heart is clear as moonlight and
 sunlight,
I have sworn to live and die with my husband.
In tears I return your pearls—
Alas, that we did not meet before I married!

A FAREWELL SONG

At the foot of the mountain, south of the pagoda,
We will drink a farewell cup before parting.
After this you will enter your carriage to go,
Giving final instructions to your servants the while.
The sky above is blue but the road is very long,
And strangers have no families or certain home.
My wish is that you will become known everywhere,
Then in a later day I will find you with ease.

AN OLD TEMPLE IN THE MOUNTAINS

Grass grows profusely in the temple courts;
The birds are peaceful in the tree tops.
Few pilgrims ever come but the tablets still remain.
Do not neglect to worship in your generation.

THE MOUNTAIN LAKE

(A Fragment)

Among the foothills of the western mountains
My boat idles gently on the flowing stream,
And in the lengthening shadows of the sunset
The sail seems to flap of its own accord.
The water is no longer in restless motion.
My boat is moored by the green rushy bank.
The moon slowly rises over the edge of the lake
And a soft light suffuses the silent world.

A POEM ON THE WESTERN MOUNTAIN
MONASTERY

Black stand the pine trees in the mountain shadows;
One may hear the sound of the brook flowing downward.

The night is cold, and the monks in the distant monastery have retired;

The moon, still lingering, shines on the west side of the mountain.

All reminds me of my former mountain home.

李白

LI PO

Y

LI PO (705-762 A. D.)

LI Po is by general consent the most famous name in Chinese literature. His was a hectic Bohemian life, a life filled with gayety and dissipation, with rocket-like success at court terminating in exile and a tragic end.

The general features of Li Po's life may be recorded as follows. He was born at Pa-hsi in Szechwan, and was said to be of imperial descent. Just before his birth his mother dreamed of the planet Venus, and from this he was named. At the age of ten he wrote poems which are still worthy of attention. As Li Po grew up he developed a taste for sword play and adventure, and in his youth wandered as far as Shantung. Retiring to a mountain with five other poets, he became the center of a hard-drinking coterie known as the Six Idlers of the Bamboo Brook. About 742 A. D. he was introduced to the Emperor Ming Huang as a "banished angel." The emperor was so charmed with Li Po's verses that he prepared a bowl of soup for the poet with his own hands, and at once appointed him to the Han-lin College. After this Li Po entered upon a career of wild dissipation at the court. An imperial summons on one occasion found him lying in a drunken stupor on the public highway.

Li Po's downfall, as well as his sudden rise into favor, was brought about by his poetry. With a court lady holding the ink-slab, he one day wrote some of his most impassioned lines, lines at which the emperor was so overcome that he bade the influential eunuch Kao Li-shih to take off

Li Po's shoes. The eunuch obeyed, but rankling under the insult, persuaded the reigning court favorite Yang Kuei-fei that she had been ridiculed in the poet's verse. Through her intervention Li Po's advancement was checked. He later withdrew from court and with a new group of friends formed the coterie known as the Eight Mortals of the Wine Cup. After a varied and wandering life, he was drowned one evening, leaning too far over the edge of a boat, in a drunken effort to embrace the reflection of the moon.

Li Po is a poet who may best be likened to the Elizabethans. He is a poet with the bravado traits of a soldier of fortune, and again he is sensitive and profound. He is at one time careless and impulsive, at another tender and sympathetic. A man with great moments of exaltation and depression. Above all, a man who loves beauty for its own sake, even if it is only the beauty of a moment.

SPRING THOUGHTS

The grass of Yen grows green and fine as silk;
Low hangs the mulberry branch in the state of Chin.
And in the remembering time of day my heart is
broken,

For then I know you think of me.

O strange Spring wind, I know you not at all.

Why do you pass through the silken curtain of my
bower?

ON AWAKENING FROM SLEEP

In this world all life is a dream.
Why do we labor so hard for our bread?
Instead, I will loiter all day by my wine flask!
Awakening, I hear in the court-yard
A bird singing among the flowers.
What season may this be?
The Spring wind answers that the songster is the
mango-bird.
I regret I did not know it was Springtime—
Now I must fill my wine cup for joy!
Singing, I await the rising of the moon.
My song is ended, and all my worldly cares forgot.

A SPRING SONG IN SOLITUDE ,

The air of the world is changed by the East wind!
Water and woods luxuriantly welcome the Spring;
A white moonlight is shining on the grass;
The falling petals of Spring flowers fly one by one
 through the air;
The mountain tops have emptied themselves of clouds,
And all the birds are seeking places for their nests.
Everything has a place to call its own,
But I am alone.
I gaze on this moonlit world,
And singing, I drink in the fragrance of the Spring
 flowers.

ADMIRING THE HERMITS ON SOUTH MOUNTAIN

Through my open door I can see the hermitage on
the summit of South Mountain.

Gazing, I realize that in these ascetics is personified
Those high ideals to which I can hardly give a name.
This beautiful mountain scene appears before me daily.
Sometimes the white clouds rise high above the mountain peak,

And rising disappear into the top of the sky.

My heart realizes that in like manner earthly things
will pass away;

And as I ponder, oft times inspiration comes to me

To go and dwell with those mountain hermits

And think no longer on the earthy things of this
vain world.

TO A FRIEND LEAVING FOR SZECHWAN

I heard that the road in Szechwan is rough and
crooked,
So crooked that no one wants to travel it,
So steep that the mountains rise precipitously before
one's face
And the clouds hover about the horse's head.
But beautiful flowers are by the roadside,
And the Spring waters flow around the city.
Your destiny has been settled!
You will not need to consult Kwan Ping, the sooth-
sayer.

THOUGHTS ON A QUIET NIGHT

Before my couch, shining brightly, was the moon-
light,

I wondered if it were not frost on the ground.

I raised my head and looked upon the mountain moon.

I bowed my head and thought of my ancestral home.

AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

Why am I living among the green mountains?
I laugh, but my heart cares not to answer.
The peach petals on the water flow on—
My heart inhabits a place known to no man of this
world.

REMINISCENCES OF THE PALACE

In the olden garden a deserted tower crumbles,
Where the willows grow green again.
The notes of the water-nut song are sweet,
Though they seem to mourn the Springtime.
I see nothing but the moon on the West River,
The same moon that shone of yore upon this palace
of Wu.

IN AUTUMN I ASCEND THE NORTH TOWER

As in a picture stands the city by the riverside:
Clear is the sky above the mountain in the evening
 dusk;
On either side of the town flow streams, clear as
 mirrors,
Spanned by two bridges, like rainbows dropped from
 heaven.
The smoke from the cooking of evening meals floats
 among the citron trees
And late Autumnal colors sadden the paulownias.
Whoever would think of remembering the North
 Tower?
I came to remember Prince Hsieh, while the wind
 blows in my face.

MEMORIES OF THE CAPITOL OF THE YUEH

The King of Yueh, Kou Chien, defeated the kingdom
of Wu

And returned in triumphant pride.

All his loyal men came home in luxuriant dress

And the court ladies, like the flowers that fill the
Spring,

Gathered within the palace.

Now only partridges are flying there.

ALONE WITH CHING MOUNTAIN

Flocks of birds fly high and are gone,
Just a solitary piece of cloud sails slowly by,
I sit alone, communing with the towering summit of
Chin Ting.
Long we commune, but we never grow weary of each
other.

THE SORROWING ONE OF THE JADE STAIRCASE

The jade staircase is jewelled with heavy white dew.
Should the night be prolonged it would wet her silken
slippers.

Within she lowers the crystal curtain
To gaze at the clear Autumn moon shining through.

MEMORIES OF THE EASTERN MOUNTAINS

How many times has the chrysanthemum blossomed
and faded,
And the white clouds vanished of themselves
Since I last worshiped the moon in my eastern mountain home?
Would that I knew to whose home the bright moon
now goes!

A SOLILOQUY

With the solace of wine I care not that the sun has set.
Falling flower-petals cover my garments!
Awaking from my drinking I shall walk in the moon-
lit ravine,
Though all birds and men have long since retired.

THE PLEASURE-TIME OF YOUTH

In Spring the youth of Wu Ling gather in the City
of the East

With their silver studded saddles and white horses.
Trampling the fallen petals of Spring flowers under
horse hoofs,

They laugh and enter the pavilion of the song girls.

A JOURNEY IN THE DAWN

In the early morning I made departure from White
King,

(The city is among the many colored clouds)

Traveling down the stream one thousand *li* to Chiang-
ling.

One can return within a day.

The chattering of monkeys from both banks of the
stream

Still lingers in my ears,

Though my boat has passed ten thousand hills.

NIGHTFALL ON THE RIVER

The brilliance of the sunset sky is reflected on the
white sand,

And the rocks seem to move with the flowing swell
of the river.

The moon follows a junk as it seeks the sheltering
curve,

Fearing that snow is coming with the night.

HEARING A FLUTE ON A SPRING NIGHT

From whose flute, playing in some hidden place, come
those flying notes,
Which the Spring wind wafts over the town?
The melody is that of the Willow Song.
Who can hear it and not think of his former loves?

FAREWELL ON LEAVING WU CHANG

A yellow bird and the moon to the West—
And the Yangtze River stretching away its ten thousand miles of love.

The Spring wind is blowing incessantly.

Sadly I think of Wu Chang and departure.

Half of the wine remains in my farewell cup,

I cannot drain it all and say goodbye.

Our cities are connected by the river

And I depart with a small boat.

I grieve that I cannot be your citizen.

Ah! I have one more song;

I will sing as I row my boat.

FAREWELL TO A FRIEND

At one time we caroused under the willows,
By the light of the wick lamp and the half-moon.
Because we became drunk and sang
The birds were afraid and flew away.
Now you are departing—
When shall we meet again?

AN APOSTROPHE TO THE MOON

How often, clear sky, will you return?
Now, as I stop to drink, I ask you.
Man yearns to touch the moon, but he cannot.
Even when I walk the moon seems to walk with me.
It is bright as a mirror of glass for
There is no cloud in the sky.
I look toward the sea and observe waves brightened by
the moon.
It seems that Winter has gone and Spring has come.
Moon, you will always remain the same in the sky.
Ah! The men of the present time cannot see the ancient
moon,
But the present moon has shone on all ancient men.
All generations, past and present, flow on like water,
But all look on the self-same moon.
I have no thought but to drink to you only, O moon,
For you will always shine on my golden wine flask.

AN INVITATION SONG

Let us now drink away our sorrow;
We have wine for a hundred cups on our table,
And a clear night with good weather is the time
For us to talk of the old things.
The shining moon makes us reluctant to retire.
Even if we become drunk, we may sleep on the
 mountain
With the sky as our blanket and the earth as our bed.

AN AUTUMN MOOD

Are you saddened at the green grass withering?
I grieve that old age is advancing and my face is be-
coming wrinkled;
I mourn for the falling petals of the Yong flower.
Now is the time to put wine on the table.
Hear the sound of music playing farewell to the setting
sun;
But there is still a shadow on the mountain pool.
If we do not drink together tonight,
When and with whom shall I revel?

ON VISITING A CLEAR SPRING

I am sad because the sun is setting and night is drawing near;

I like to linger by this clear spring

Which does not mix and follow with the common water.

It does not, like men, mix with all sorts of company.

I sing songs to the clear clouds and the moon;

When I finish the pine trees overhead continue my song.

AUTUMN THOUGHTS

The God of Heaven seems to have no heart,
Permitting thus the beauty of the Summer world to be
Autumnal.

But everything has its own season.
Southward flying birds do not care for human beings
And the fish has his time.

Looking up—the snow is falling;
Looking down—the green grass and beautiful trees
Are becoming more withered each day.

But the garden's beautiful chrysanthemums stand tall
and bloom luxuriantly.

Why should we not drink a cup of wine to celebrate
their beauty,

Or rather should we sing a song for this flower?

杜 甫

TU FU

Y

TU FU

Tu Fu (712-770, A. D.) was born at Tu-ling in the province of Shensi. He is ranked by the Chinese as one of their greatest poets, and is often mentioned as an equal of Li Po. In early youth Tu Fu gave brilliant promise of a great literary career, but he failed to distinguish himself at the public examinations where verse making counted for so much. Paradoxically, after this failure he devoted himself to poetry as a profession and soon won the attention of his contemporaries. Tu Fu is recorded to have had such a high opinion of his own poetry that he prescribed it as a cure for malarial fever.

In his public life Tu Fu's was a varied career. He served under both the Emperors Ming Huang and Su Tsung, suffering exile twice during the stormy reigns of these two emperors, and eventually taking of his own accord to a wandering life.

In Tu Fu's work there is an undertone of sadness which is continually apparent. It is a note which does not seem to spring from a religious dissatisfaction with life. It is rather the world-weariness of a man who has seen much, endured much, and observed the crumbling of society in times of revolution. Tu Fu was a man who suffered intensely at the hands of a vacillating fortune.

ON FIGHTING

If you would use the bow, use the strongest;
If you would use the arrow, use the longest;
But if you would stop a man, first shoot the horse;
If you would disperse the robber-band, first capture the
chieftain.

There are limits to the necessity of killing men.
Every country has its boundaries;
If we can prevent the invader from crossing the
boundary of Lin,
There will be no need of bloodshed.

THOUGHTS AFTER A JOURNEY

In the evening I entered the military camp through the
eastern gate,

Passing over the bridge in the gathering twilight.

The last rays of the setting sun fell upon a large
banner;

Winds brought the loud neighing of horses to my ears.

From the smooth desert rose the ten thousand tents,

Divided into sections by companies.

A bright moon was hanging in mid sky.

So firm was the discipline that the night was silent,

Save for several sad notes from a bugle;

The soldiers seemed pensive and did not wish for war.

I would like to know the commander of this camp.

I think it was Chou Pi-yu.

THE SOLDIER-STATESMAN RETURNS I

To the west of the towering mountain is a red cloud,
For the sun is setting into the smooth desert floor.
At the door of my house, a crow, thinking me a
stranger is cawing.

I have traveled a thousand *li* to come home.
My wife is surprised I am alive in this world,
But the fright is gone and she joyously removes her
tears.

This world is full of wars which cause our separation;
I thought at one time I had left her a man and would
return a spirit.

The neighbors are climbing the wall to gaze at me,
And every one sighs gently but not aloud, "Ah".
It is past midnight; I light another candle,
And facing my wife we speak as in a dream of the past.

THE SOLDIER-STATESMAN RETURNS II

My age is great, yet I must steal the time
To return home and see my wife and children
Who clamoringly try to sit upon my knee,
Seemingly afraid I will depart again.
Memories of the youthful days when I cooled myself
Under shady trees by the lotus pond come to me.
But now the north winds of old age grow chill,
And when I remember the affairs of state, my heart
fears.

The rice and wheat for wine are all harvested;
I think the wine is made:
Now will I fill my cup and drink to the comforts of
age.

The chickens are scrambling and cackling without,
 As guests scatter and frighten them away to the trees;
 Then I hear a knocking on my door.
 Several village elders come to inquire of my experi-
 ences abroad,
 Each bearing in his hand a gift.
 Wine is brought, poured and we drink,
 Though I notice they reluctantly sip at it,
 Weak, for the wheat fields have been ravaged by war.
 Soldiers and guns and weapons are still going on—
 All the men who cultivated the soil have gone to fight
 on the eastern fields.
 I try to sing a song with the village elders,
 But it is hard to sing when the heart is heavy.
 Our song is ended with faces turned skyward.
 My guests at the four corners of the table have tear-
 filled eyes.

AN INCIDENT OF WAR

One evening at the village of Che Kao
A captain came, drafting the last men for war.
An old man escaped by crossing behind the wall
And his wife went out to receive the soldiers.
They were wrathful and savage,
But the old woman appeared so disconsolate
At last they listened to what she said.
"I have only three sons—they are all soldiers now.
The eldest has sent me a mournful letter:
My second son has just been killed in battle.
The third is still in this life,
But alas, the dead boy is far from me!
No male is there now within this house,
Save my grandson who is still a suckling babe.
My daughter-in-law is also here
But without a perfect shirt, destitute of clothes,
And last of all, myself, old and worn.
But I will go with you if you wish;
I will respond to the call of battle;
Perhaps I can cook for you."
Deep night has fallen and all is quiet,
Save that somewhere one can hear weeping.
In the early morning the aged woman departs for the
battlefields;
Leaving behind a wretched old man.

THE HOUSE OF GRASS AND BRANCHES

(A Fragment)

Today the roof of my house was blown away
By the hard, chill winds of Autumn.
It was simply made—of grass and branches,
My only shelter save for the way.

THE RETURN OF THE WANDERERS

The red clouds beneath the setting sun
Cover the massive foot hills of the west.
A rose-hued light floods the valleys.
Beautiful birds are seeking their nests for rest.

GAZING AT TAI SHAN

The majesty of Tai Shan is difficult to describe:
At its foot are the prosperous states of Chu and Lu;
The Creator intended both the states and mountain to
 be the abode of greatness.
The summit of Tai Shan soars beyond the tops of the
 clouds So high
That the sun can shine but on one side at a time.
Even though one looks intently he can scarcely glimpse
 birds flying around the summit.
I do not know when I shall reach this mountain top
And be able to look down upon the small hills.

李商隱

LI SHANG-YIN

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LI SHANG-YIN (813-858 A. D.)

LI SHANG-YIN, a native of Honan, took his degree in 837 A. D. He rose to be a reader in the Han-lin College and distinguished himself as a poet and scholar. His poetry is marked with an intense love of nature.

ON RISING EARLY

A cool wind blows over the clear morning dew;
Early-risen I stand by myself at the open window;
The orioles and flowers are singing and laughing.
Who else is there to enjoy this Springtime?

MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN

The hours of night were passing
And still sleep escaped me.
With tense concentration I thought I could hear
Even the dripping of the dew.
Arising from my bed, I opened the door,
Revealing a western park with hills that soared heaven-
ward.

THE PLEASURES OF A SIMPLE LIFE

Living on these pleasant hillsides,
Removed from the noise and strife of the world,
Quietly with nature communing,
Happy is the life I pass!
The bamboo copses wave,
Fanned by the soft breezes of evening.
Fairy seems the night
With flowers and moonbeams mingling.
Slowly the stream flows on
Rippling over scattered rocks and stones,
While down the bank, around the bend,
The moss-grown footpath follows.
With friends, simple customs and wine,
With my lute and the old songs,
I want no other heaven.

崔 灝

TS'UI HAO

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TS'UI HAO

LITTLE is known of Ts'ui Hao save that he was graduated with high literary honors about 730 A.D., and was reputed to be a great gambler and lover of wine. As a writer his fame rests principally upon a poem which he wrote on the Yellow Crane pagoda, a landmark which had been erected to designate the spot where Wang Tsu-chi'iao, who had attained immortality, went up to heaven in broad daylight. This incident is recorded to have occurred six centuries before the Christian era. The pagoda until recently stood on the bank of the Yangtze River near Hankow. The great Li Po himself once thought of writing on the same theme but dismissed the thought immediately when he read Ts'ui Hao's famous lines.

THE YELLOW CRANE PAGODA

Hence heavenward a sage departed as a bird,
Here commemorated by the Yellow Crane pagoda.
The bird is gone and will return no more,
Though the white clouds are as those of former years.
Toward the east lies a luxuriant forest;
Breezes bring flower-fragrance from the west.
Daily will I turn in this direction,
Gazing beyond the broad river.

THE PAGODA

Red peonies bloom at the base of the pagoda,
And at my mountain casement are many beautiful
chrysanthemums.

I understand why you are intoxicated with the beauty
of these flowers;

Even the butterfly hovers around them as in a dream!

THE STONE WELL

The hues of the peach blossom are reflected in the well
And the water is red from these blooms.
Who knows that the quiet well-waters
Are not communing with the Ma Lin peach orchard?

RIVER TRAVEL

My sampan is as light as a leaf;
The soft breeze is not stirring up angry waves;
I sail wherever I wish and anchor by the grassy shore.
All I hear through the night is the sound of Autumn.

MINOR T'ANG DYNASTY POETS

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MINOR T'ANG DYNASTY POETS

THE dynasty, stretching from 600 to 900, A. D. is usually considered to be the Golden Age of Chinese literature. It is also associated in Chinese minds with much romance of love and war, with wealth, culture and refinement, with accompanying frivolity, extravagance and dissipation. But the choicest flower of the age was poetry. Within these three hundred years the best efforts of the Chinese people in verse were produced, and the poems have been carefully handed down to posterity as finished models for all future poets. Among the outstanding writers of the time were Li Po, Tu Fu, Wang Wei and Meng Hao-jan, some of whose poems have already been included in this volume. The work of the poets included in this "minor" group was less in volume but no less in variety and richness.

AN AUTUMN EVENING IN THE GARDEN

(Li Yi, T'ang Dynasty)

The summer has gone, yet the heat remains;
Sleepless nights still leave us all fatigued.
Acquainted with the garden, I have moved my couch
And on it now I comfortably recline.
Soft moonlight shines through the white clouds
Which have filmed themselves across the sky,
And falls on dewy grass, flowers and trees,
While from a tower night-birds are faintly calling.

LONGING FOR DEPARTED COMRADES

(Han Yu, 762-824 A. D.)

The birds at the open window
Are calling me into the sunset garden.
But I have no heart now for flowers and birds,
Since my comrades have departed.

A DESCRIPTIVE POEM I

(Han Wu, T'ang Dynasty)

The moon does not shine very brightly in the hall;
Without, the solitary lotus droops.
I stand alone on the deserted steps
As the wind blows and the shadows swing.

A DESCRIPTIVE POEM II

After the rain the mossy house-steps are green;
Frost comes and reddens the highest leaves;
A slanting sunbeam shines on the deserted stairway.
Sad am I, with only my parrot to sympathize.

A DESCRIPTIVE POEM III

The chill of early Spring enters through my silken curtains.

Reclining by my painted window, I cannot sleep.

With nightfall has come the rain on the South Lake,
Drenching the boatman who is among the water-lilies.

WORSHIPING THE NEW MOON

(Li Tuan, T'ang Dynasty)

Raising my curtain I see the new moon;
I go down the front steps to kneel in worship.
If I speak in a low voice no one will hear me.
Ah! The chill north wind is blowing.

THE LOTUS POOL

(Li Chao Lin, T'ang Dynasty)

Fragrant flowers are on the water near the curving
shore;

Like shadows on the water, the pool seems round.

I always fear the Autumn winds will come too soon,
blowing away the petals,

And you will never know they have already bloomed!

HOME-COMING

(Tu Mu, 803-852 A. D.)

My children clutch at my clothes and ask,
“Why do you return so late?
Why do you compete for fame,
When all you receive is white hair?”

FROM THE TIME YOU LEFT HOME

(Chang Chiu-ling, 673-740 A. D.)

From the moment that you left home
I have had no time to care for the loom.
As the full moon, my heart is filled with thoughts of
you;
The moon wanes, but my full heart never.

MODERN MAGAZINE AND ANONYMOUS POETRY

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MODERN MAGAZINE AND ANONYMOUS POETRY

THE following poems are either from modern Chinese magazines or anonymous. They are for the most part bits of stray fugitive verse which I gathered in the inception of my work with Mr. Li Cheuk Po. I regret I have not been able to determine for the anonymous poems the relative dates of composition. I group them all together in this section, feeling that there is a strain of poetic beauty and sentiment in them worthy of preservation.

A SONG FROM THE YANG-TZE RIVER

I am married to a merchant who travels far;
Each dawn I wait his return but my expectations fail.
If I had known the faithfulness of the tides
I would have married the boatman.

TSO CITY

Over a desolate city along the river

Birds are crying mournfully.

On the far side is the ancient temple of Wu Yin.

The only thing here resembling the olden time

Is the solitude of the desert.

IN THE SMALL HOUSE

All people are gone from this small house tonight.
Without, the moon appears as clouds are banked to one
side.

In this quiet peace my anxieties will disappear;
I have no desire to leave this small house.

FISH

The small fish in a beautiful lake—
At first it is not afraid of man.
But after the time it knows the bait and has bitten,
It is too late to learn.

A WALK IN SPRINGTIME

Nine days of gloomy Spring and only one is clear!

I am weary of rain and walk lazily.

The wet mud and the nearly-dried rain are still on the
roadside;

The green water of the lake is like a mirror.

In the shade of the willows I sit and drink wine,

Watching the farmers cultivate their heavy crops in the
rich soil.

But the farmers never say that rainy days are boresome;

They are always talking about a prosperous year!

THE FIREFLY

I saw a firefly in a small corner of a garden,
Visiting the bosom of each flower.
The half-moon is not very bright
And the sky is overcast with clouds,
But towards the west the little firefly still makes a light.

RAIN AND AN AUTUMN NIGHT

I sit by myself in a lonesome hall:
The thoughts of Autumn are sadly deep.
In the center is the gong of Tung-lo.
The Yao tribe has heard all kinds of sounds of rain.
I sit alone and spend the time with only the wick lamp.

THE VIEW FROM EAST GATE

This morning the fishing boats went out to sea,
Now they are anchored under the willow trees.
In the morning the tide flows toward the West,
Now it is flowing toward the East.
On my table is a dim lamp and wine remains.
I lie down on my bed and hear the low patter of rain
Falling on the roofs.

A GARDEN PICTURE

Swans are flying north and south of the stream,
And everywhere fishing boats can be seen in the bright
sunlight.

I do not know which is the most beautiful object in the
garden,

For all is a picture of an Autumn world.

林松柏

LUM CHUNG PAK

Y

LUM CHUNG PAK

LUM CHUNG PAK, a native of Ku Jeng in the province of Kwangtung, came to America as a young man, received an American education, and is now teaching in a Chinese school in New York City. He has mastered the English language and is able to write in both English and Chinese. His work is unique for the blending of modern themes and imagery with the spirit of the classical. In 1927 he published a volume entitled *Chinese Verse*.

The influence of the Oriental on the modern vers libre and imagist movements is evident. Occidental poets, many of them, have been experimenting with the hokku, tanka and stop-short forms. Others have attempted to capture the elusive spirit of the Oriental in their work. These poems from Lum Chung Pak are interesting evidence of the influence the Occidental has in turn had on a Chinese poet.

EVENING ON THE RIVER

The afterglow is fading from the West;
The gentle breeze along the river's gloaming
Wafts from green fields the Springtide's sweet perfume.

The house boats anchored by the sandy banks
Stand idle, while their masters tend
The driftwood fires and cook the evening meal.
The farmers homeward bring their plodding herds
To where lanterns aglow keep light.
The wild birds, fretful, settle in their nests
And leave the night to cover all in peace.

ON VISITING THE TOWER OF THE HERON

The daylight is hiding behind the mountain tops,
The Yellow River is flowing toward the sea.
If you would feast your eyes upon a thousand miles of
space,
You need but climb another story of this tower.

NOCTURNE

The trees are waiting for the moonlight,
And birds are flying to find nests;
The long day is past and come is the night.
We can see only the starlight in the sky.

EARLY SPRING

I see the trees that are budding,
I can hear the birds that sing.
Winter is past, and come is the early Spring.
Come, birds, spread the wing!

ON VISITING THE CHERRY BLOSSOM GARDEN

I visited a cherry blossom garden in the month of May,
The colors, white and red, were pure as those of a
beautiful maiden.

They were as radiant as sunbeams piercing through the
gloom.

But rain came, snow came, during the joyful month of
May;

And the beauty of the blossoms faded as does the sad
widow's face.

I, too, am sad of heart.

FALLEN FLOWER PETALS

Flowers were these, once beautiful and sweet,
Courtèd by the butterfly and bee.
Now nothing cares for them, and they
Tell sadly of romance deserted, turned to shame.

THE GARDEN ORIOLE

The beautiful oriole flying in the garden

Flits from one tree branch to the next.

How seeming full of joy she is, and proud in every
way!

The oriole has forgotten she was once a little worm.

LATE SUMMER

The birds are ending their songs,
The flowers fade and die.
Too swiftly the days speed by;
The Summer is too short
And the Winter seems eternal.

IN THE OLD TEMPLE

Beauty is decaying within these temple walls;
The colors of the flowers are changed and sere.
White haired women still linger on,
But sitting sedately, telling tales of former times.

MOONLIGHT

The bright moon permits a few soft, clear stars to shine
in the sky.

All the world is unchanged save that my age grows
greater day by day.

Under the shadow of this moonlight there can only be
found lonely men and women tonight.

But the moon never grows old, and her sky is never less
than delight.

THE SOLITARY VIRGIN

Do you, far away, know how long you have been gone?
Since your departure, tears from my eyes have never
ceased to flow.

Each day has seemed a long, endless year.

The lamp is my lonely companion in the silent night,
As I watch the slow swinging of the clock's pendulum.
The winds rattle the door and I think it is your knock;
Sleepless, troubled, are my hours in bed.

In the front garden all the flowers are abloom,
But I cannot enjoy them without you.

I try to write, but words will not come from a heavy
heart.

Fervently, each morning and evening, I pray for your
return.

Why did Heaven bring us together only to send you
far away?

Even as an immortal spirit I will follow wherever you
are.

NEW YEAR THOUGHTS

The hands of the clock are nearing midnight!
The smiling faces of men are lit with anticipation;
The coming of the new year brings hope for the
future.

But no one knows what he cherishes most!
I myself am the same today as yesterday.
Think of the Past—it has been a fleeting moment.
Think of the Future—it seems so long.
Is man's life a mere dream?

SOUL

O soul! Just as smoke—

When the fire is out you also disappear.

I see the moon shine through the glass—

The glass may break—but the moonlight is just as clear.

BROTHERHOOD

We all live in the house of our Father;
He made the heavens, he made the earth.
Man he has divided into many races.
However these may differ in appearance,
Each is the same before birth,
And each is the same dust when dead.

THE BATTLE FIELD

This great lonely field.
The grass has not been green for long,
It has been touched by the hand of death.
Unnumbered lives were lost here in the long ago;
Parents lost their sons;
Maidens lost their lovers—never to see them again.
Men died.
Who was victorious?

MIDNIGHT

The world is at rest;
Things are silent and dead,
Hidden away from sight like little birds in their nests.
My heart is full of pain and droops with loneliness.
The cold north winds that bend the sweet bamboo
Bring to my lonely heart their bitter cry,
And I sigh to the moon that shines in silent glory,
Pouring her silver light alike on the gay and the sad.
It falls on my sad heart too with a ray that keeps some
warmth.

Moon, O Moon, stay with me! I need your presence.
The moon does not answer; she keeps on her way,
Slowly she disappears, dead to my pain and regret,
Leaving me alone—
With my longings,
With my thoughts.

MOONLIGHT SAIL ON THE PEARL RIVER

The moon is silent above;
There is a heaven full of stars.
The soft breezes of night bring peace and forgetfulness.
Wild geese are flying to seek their mates;
Fishing-lights—scattered afar.
A song girl plays upon her lute
And sings her little graceful tunes.
We are desolate and alone
On a wide sea under a wide sky.
My soul is a lonely sail;
It floats between the moon above
And its fluttering shadow on the water.

A FAREWELL POEM

My heart is full of pain and tears fill my eyes,
But I bring roses to you, my dear.
Take them! Smile and be glad.
Your last words I keep in my heart.
I shall think of you ever, long for you here,
Through days that are interminable.
Ah! You are Beauty and Love personified, men say;
Give me a pledge of love—the memory of a kiss!

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